

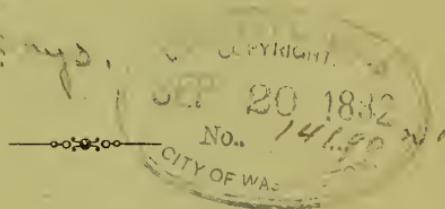
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THE CONVICT AND
OTHER POEMS.



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AUSTIN, TEXAS:
STATESMAN STEAM BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.
1882.

THE CONVICT,
AND OTHER POEMS.

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THE CONVICT.

PART FIRST.

I.

Now blooming Spring is young. The black bird calls
Unto his mate outside my prison walls.
The sun begins to build his flaming arch,
And morning ushers in the first of March.
But Spring is old within my withered soul—
So old, she seems not in her common role;
So old, she Summer seems, and Summer's breeze
Is cooled by early Autum's chilly wheeze,
And Autum's falling leaves smite Winter's snow,
And o'er them all the cold winds blow, and blow.
But Winter over laps both Spring and Fall
And casts on each young hope an icy pall.
Thus round and round they always backward go,
Each previous season always growing slow
And each succeeding season gaining speed,
In order to o'er lap with hasty greed,
Till icy Winter overtops them all,
And then her deadening tentacles lets fall—
Fell hate, intense remorse and deep despair—
And feels about, and in my heart, and there,
With deadly cold and horrid, fateful clasp,
Summer, Fall and Spring, they, eager grasp,
And hold them fast within a frozen vice
Till all become one solid block of ice,
And they all go hurrying round, and ever
Comes Winter, Winter, Winter, Winter,
Each season colder than the one before,
Until my heart sends forth warm life no more
Thro'out my veins, but at each beat I die
And feel my hueless blood all vitrify
With horror. And betwixt each beat I live

In constant, yearning hope that death will give
Perpetual stillness to my aching heart
And freeze its gates so tight they'll never start.

II.

How black the night of gloom that hangs about my soul,
On which the fiends of hell my guilty burden roll !
Oh, that I ne'er had done the dark and awful deed !
The demon, Passion, would not tho'ts of prudence heed.
He spoke a word which roused in me relentless hate ;
He spoke a word which doomed his life, and sealed his fate.

I tho't him viler than the serpent who betrayed
The trustful confidence of Eve, and thereby made
A broad and tempting road from paradise to hell,
Which Eve and Adam trod, and which we love too well.
But even in his death, when rose the ashen hue,
He lovely seemed, and sweet, as when I deemed him true.
He always was my fav'rite ideal of a man
Until the news that he was false I learned from Ann,
Whose truthfulness I could no easier suspect
Than noonday light, alho' the sky with clouds beflecked.
'Twas hard to think that he would vilify my name,
But 'twas impossible her faithfulness to blame.
I could not doubt her word, and therefore sinned a sin
Whose awfulness so stuns me, when I glance within
The book of my past life, and see its bloody leaf,
I scarce think upon it, and not die with grief.

III.

Remorse's sting is fiercer than Death's dart,
For, when a dart is flung, it's pain is short,
But many aching throes a sting creates.

IV.

1.

'Tis hard my allotted time to bid ;
A horrid friend stands by my side,
Nor ever leaves my sight,
But thrusts into my soul a rough-edged knife.

And then withdraws, and thrusts again.
 Thus am I always racked with pain
 That lasts all day, all night,
 Whose weakness makes it with more terror rife,
 Because its mis'ry cannot vanquish life.

2.

This fiend, tremendous, holds me fast,
 And glares with horrid eyes so vast,
 That fear and dread consume me.
 His only weapon is the knife, made rough
 To torture hearts more perfectly.
 Thus am I filled with misery
 To which my own sins doom me,
 And not till death will vengence cry "enough,"
 Or stay Remorse's pitiless rebuff.

PART SECOND.

I. 1.

Mankind is always duped by woman's wiles ;
 His love-blind eyes see naught in her but honey,
 Until the great eye-opener, matrimony,
 Reveals her traits, his angel dreams defiles.

2.

But even then she ever has her way ;
 Apparently conceding to his will,
 She rules him with persuasive skill,
 And with obedient sceptre holds her sway.

II.

'Tis strange that I should lose my faith in him,
 My dearest friend, long loved and often tried !
 'Tis strange that I should let a foolish whim
 Cause me no longer in him to confide.

III.

To the happy, careless days of youth, take me back, take
me back, Oh, Time!

I feel the warm glow of my life's summer days,
And blissfully bask in sweet Memory's haze
Which reveals loved scenes, so long forgot, and my hap-
piest years, my prime.

IV. 1.

Ah, well I mind those happy times gone by,
And gone forever, for no more shall we,
As brothers dear, go to and from the school,
Nor in our books to excel each other try,
Nor help each other 'gainst an enemy
Or one who told when e'er we broke the rule.

2.

We called him "Handsome Rufus" then, and well ;
For Beauty sat with wondrous symmetry
And comeliness upon his form and face.
His gentle manners always would compel
From those who knew him, envious jealousy
Or friendship, which to love soon grew apace—
From strangers, comments on his supple grace.

3.

Nor did this notice serve to turn his head ;
He always called me "Brother," and looked up
With trustful love into my eyes, as tho'
His sole protection there alone he read ;
For he was oft attacked and pommeled by a group
Of bullies, who were moved with envy low.
And always would I hasten to the throng
And quick disperse them all ; for I was strong.

4.

One day he heard a larger boy than he
Tell boastingly a monstrous lie on me,
And straightway said 'twas false, and struck him hard,

But, being small and weak, was overpowered.
From that time forth I watched these youthful roughs
And saved Ruf many cruel kicks and cuffs ;
For never would he cry, nor call for aid,
Nor come and tell me when they hurt him bad.

5.

We had no secrets that were not divulged
With confidence, into each other's ears,
Except those secrets which we would not own
Were ours, but sought, unconsciously, with tears.

6.

I loved him as I never loved false Ann ;
She was our school mate, pretty, bright and smart ;
I loved her, and she trifled with my heart,
Tho' then tho't my love-course smoothly ran.

7.

She looked at me with mischief in her eye,
And, tho' I then had no such tho't, nor knew,
Being passion-blind, but that she loved me true,
She looked at him with love ; but he was shy.

PART THIRD.

I.

Years have flown, and my love still glows :
Youth has gone, and my flame still grows.

II.

1.

The last letter she wrote was so sweet that I tho't
She sorrowed that we were apart ;
And I'll write her this eve, and I'll ask her to leave
Th' old village, and come to my heart.

2.

This is a secret Rufus has not shared ;
 He's such a tease, I never yet have dared
 To whisper in his friendly ears my hopeful fate—
 He seems so blithe and happy, here of late !

3.

I'll write a note this eve—I'll write a note to Ann ;
 And then my mind relieve by telling Ruf my plan.

III.

Was it a dream ? Oh, joy ! It *was* a dream.
 Again, oh, joy ! That dreams are not realities,
 For how, how could I live in peacefulness
 When life had gone, my friend, from out your breast,
 How could I live ?
 How could my blood not cease to swell my veins
 When I behold her blood slow oozing forth
 From out her mouth ? And then, oh, dreadful tho't !
 To feel upon my wrists the murderer's bracelets
 And know that I had slain ye both—Avaunt !
 Ye horrid visions, leave my troubled mind !
 Why troubled ? I am filled with mystery.
 Why did he gasp and stare, and clutch the air, and pale
 When I had told him of my hopeful fate ?
 What did that letter mean he dropped, which read
 So lovingly, and signed, "Your sweet-heart, Ann ?"
 She spoke to him of me as only friend—
 What can it mean ? I'm filled with mystery.

IV.

1.

Rufus has lost all his glee ; now he does not notice me.
 Studioously he shuns to see my curious looks, to know—
 why he
 So strangely did last night at tea—I'd sooner hunt a nimble flea !
 I hope no fate has said that we shall brothers dear no longer be.

2.

I cannot meet him on the street,
Nor can I beat his pace so fleet.

3.

I hate these offish ways of Ruf—
What ails the man ! I'm much perplexed.
Ann loves him, for I saw the proof—
Why does he mope ? I'm almost vexed.

4.

If Ann loves him, and he loves Ann,
Why—let him take her, and be glad ;
E'en tho' it cause my cheek to wane,
E'en tho' I know 'twill drive me mad.

V.

1.

I feel a great grief o'er me creeping ;
I hear my poor heart sadly weeping :

2.

"Oh, for a quiet nook, in which to dwell,
Free from care !
Some favored spot ; some lone, secluded dell,
In which to hide away, where none can tell
The woes of man to me, and break the spell,
Sweet and rare.

3.

"Oh, for an eagle's wings, that I might fly
From broken hearts !
The race I dwell with is a race that die—
Yea, 'tis a race that long for death and sigh,
And in its flood the pain to quench they try
Of fiery darts !

4.

"Oh, for the speed of lightening ! I would haste
From all pain ;
No more the woes of blighted love to taste,
No more my strength in doleful grief to waste,
No more to have my hopes, tho' pure and chase,
All in vain !"

VI.

1.

I said to my weeping and sore, bleeding heart,
"Why wither away, tho' in pain as thou art ?
It's better to live than to die.
It's better to hope than despair, is it not ?
Then why do you pine for a happier lot ?
The star of your hope is too high.

2.

"Insatiable hunger, your pangs are in vain,
Is friendship, true friendship, a thing to obtain
From every fair daughter of Eve ?
To gain but a smile from an angel like her
Were happiness, such as you ought to prefer
To mis'ry. Then why do you grieve?"

3.

The body, obedient, is governed by will ;
But love for my idol continued to thrill
The strings of my heart in refrain.
I wept as they vibrated fiercely and fast,
While played on by sorrow, so deep and so vast,
It seemed that despair was the strain :

4.

"Go, tell the eagle, 'Make your nest
Not high, but in the vale ;
Soar not aloft, but come and rest,
Secure from every gale.'

5.

"Say thou to smoke, 'Rise not above,'
To fleecy clouds, 'Descend.'
Then tell me not to seek her love,
But call her only 'friend !'"

—
PART FOURTH.

I. 1.

I tho't to hear from Ann, long since ;
'Twill cause, I fear, my heart to wince—
Her letter, when it comes.

2.

The summer days aweary grow.
'Tis true, my fate I almost know,
And hope's bright star seems sickly faint,
Yet visions bright I try to paint,
And try to think 'twill make me feel
More cheerful, and my sore heart heal—
Her letter, when it comes.

3.

I tho't I felt my heart's last blow,
But still it beats, but beats so slow,
And smites so weak upon my breast
That Echo answers, "Give me rest !"
Between the strokes, so slight, so slight—
'Twill cheer my heart to-night, to-night—
Her letter, when it comes.

4.

Last night I heard the croaking frogs
Down in the slimy, marshy bogs,
And they seemed to croak of deep despair ;
But soon, upon the slumbrous air
Crept the soft notes of a nightengale,

And then, from behind a cloudy veil,
Burst forth and shone a brilliant star—

But I tho't it was a tear :
And the nightengale seemed so far, so far,
And the croaking frogs so near !
I hope 'twill drive despair away,
And cause to break perpetual day
Within my heart. What will it say—
Her letter, when it comes ?

II. 1.

A mocking bird entered my window to-day.
He had not the manners to bow, and to say,
“ Good morning, I hope you are well, sir ? ”
But sat, indisdain, upon top of the clock
And looked like he wondered whence came the “ tick
tock,”
But would not say, “ Won’t you please tell, sir ? ”

2.

In silence I watched him, and, listening, lay,
Expecting a favor, and hoping he’d stay
Until I should hear his sweet warble.
My hopes were in vain ; for his eyes fell on me,
And then thro’ the window, and out to a tree
He flew, tho’ I lay still as marble.

3.

A black bird flew into my window to-day.
He seemed quite polite, and endeavored to say,
“ Good afternoon ; I hope you are well sir ? ”
But cracked was his voice, and, instead of this speech
He uttered a horrible, ear-splitting screech
That sounded like “ Hope you may quell sir ! ”

4.

I waited no longer, but arose from my bed
And drove him away to relieve my poor head,
Then, pensive, returned to my couch,
Reflecting and pond’ring on bungling mankind,

Who know not the place where their talents can find,
And feel the appreciative touch.

5.

While thus I compared my two callers to man,
And fancy thro' realms of dark imagery ran,
Two spirits stood close to my bed.
The countenance of one had a sad, heavy look,
And one was so radiant my eyes could not brook
Her splendor. The sad faced one said :

6.

"Sweet sister-spirit, can there be
Aught good on earth that he can see?"
The radiant spirit thus replied,
"Let hope be his. He is but tried."

7.

They hushed, but their lute-strings continued to thrill
My ears with delight, and my sore heart to fill
With the soothing and comforting strain.
Then I tho't that both lutes tried to play the same tune:
Sad wailings, rejoicings, were blended in one,
But the music dispelled all my pain.

8.

The spirits and lutes disappeared, but the song
Was loud as before, and the notes just as strong,
For there, on the clock, tho' removed
From its place in the morning, was sitting again,
The very same bird, for his plumage and mien
And the perch, his identity proved.

9.

Not only he sat, but poured from his throat
A song that enraptured my soul, and I tho't
Of the words the bright spirit bad spoken,
And said, "Yes, I'll hope, till I reach the bright goal.
As the bird has returned, so, in heaven, my soul
May find rest when the last sleep is broken.

III.

My dream and my callers clearly prove
That Ann is but trying my true love.

IV.

Her letter has come, and I'll now know my fate ;
I'm longing to know, tho' the hour be late,
 And the sweet smelling missive to read.
It's odor brings hope, and it softens my smart—
The sweet scented letter I press to my heart,
 And it joyfully quickens its speed.

V. 1.

And this is friendship ? Can it be true that he
Has stooped so low, and, jealous, slandered me !
 Can it be true ?

2.

My brother, *is* it true ? Oh, tell me nay !
And yet, could I believe thee, if thou shoulds't say
 That it is false ?

3.

If I could, my mind would say she lied ;
A glowing fire burns on either side—
 Which shall I quench ?

4.

The fountain of my trust can quench but one ;
I feel its flowing, rushing tide all run
 Upon the hottest.

5.

The tho't that Ann would lie, my heart denies ;
To think him true, who was my friend, it tries,
 But tries in vain.

VI. 1.

False ! He's false ! My friend is false,
But Ann believes him true.
Fierce ! I'm fierce ! My temper fierce
Such tho'ts as these undo.

2.

He thinks to win her heart with ease
And steal her love away from me—
The rogue ! By tearing down my honor's reputation.
His lying tongue and honied pleas,
Their falsness behind hypocrisy,
Have blackened my good name with low insinuation.

—
PART FIFTH.

I. 1.

My mirror or my visage has changed wonderfully,
Or else, my eyesight has grown treacherous ;
Or else, I have not waked from horror's fantasy ;
For he who looks at me from out my mirror,
Whene'er I dare to face him, seems to stare
Thro' his sunken eyes with horrid, insane glare.
His cheeks are cavernous ; his bones protrude ;
His skin sticks to him like a new-washed rag
Thrown on a jagged, sapless limb to dry.
Has deep repentance caused his cheek to fade
Before the awfulness of his great guilt ?
Whose guilt ? And for what henious crime ?
That shadow surely can't perform an act
 Or good, or bad,
But his hideous face will soon, I fear, distract
 And drive me mad.
For, if that spectre's guilty, then am I.
But maybe 'tis an untrue likeness—no,
It must be true, for I can see reflected
The picture at my back upon the wall.

2.

Oh, lovely face ! Your roundness still remains
In the picture at my back upon the wall ;
It alone your beauty still retains.

Oh, once my friend ! No more I'll hear you call
Me by the name of "Brother," for the light
Has fled from your bright eyes, no longer bright
With friendliness, as they were wont to be,
But glazed and set with leaden vacancy.

3.

The mirror must be true—cruelly true ;
And, even if 'twere not, my haggardness
Of mind and heart reveals to me my guilt.

II.

'Tis time his hands, which often gave
An untrue grasp, were folded tight
Across the Devil's shrine.
I wonder if, while in the grave,
They press his soul as heavy quite,
As his blood presses mine.

III. 1.

Strange ! That a slanderer's blood should press
So heavily upon my soul.
Because he would not e'en confess
That he had said I loved the bowl.

2.

Oh, Fate ! Fate ! Fate ! Is it thy decree I hate ?
Or my own blind passion,
So ruthlessly loosed
In so lenient a fashion,
And easy seduced ?

3.

I hate the fate that made us meet ;
I hate my temper, indiscreet.

4.

He saw me not, but walked with downcast look,
And seemed ashamed, and when I saw his grace
I forgave him his sin
And loved him again ;
For I remembered hearing him invoke,
When the moon-beams shone as bent his upturned face,
The one bright star he always claimed as his
To ever brightly shine upon us twain ;
And I remembered hearing the spiteful whiz
Of a bullet over my head, aimed at my brain,
But turned from its intended murderous course
By Rufus' hand. And then my sight grew dim
As tears welled up from my heart, their swelling source,
And I hated myself for ever hating him.

5.

When I spoke his name, he looked up with a start,
And his weary looks, and paleness touched my heart.

6.

I told him how unhappy I had been
Since learning that he'd written such a letter,
But now I hoped we'd happier be, and better,
For my heart forgave him of his sin.

7.

At that word, sin, he looked at me with wonder,
Feigned, of course, and, staring, seemed to ponder
On the meaning of my words, and said,
While "Hypocrite" in every glance I read,

8.

" My brother, could you see my heart
And feel, as I have felt, its smart,
And know the cause of its keen pain,
You'd never doubt my love again.

9.

"I have but one dear friend on earth,
And you are he ; oh ! What a dearth
Has been within my lonely breast
Until my hand you just now pressed !

10.

"That friendly pressure said to me
That we could still dear brothers be.
But what can mean that word you used ?
Is love a sin, unless abused ?"

11.

His words rang with a guilty ring
And pierced me with a wrathful sting.
His honied words which maddened me
Rang with a conscious falsity.

12.

I gave Ann's letter to him, straight,
And watched with scorn and glowing hate
The pallor which o'er spread his face,
The pallor of shameful helpfulness.

13.

He read it, flung it down, and said she lied,
To turn and flee temptation hard I tried.
He looked at me and said she lied, again,
And fiercely said it o'er and o'er, and then,
I know not what I did, nor ever will.
He lay upon the pavement, white and still,
His brains and blood mixed with his wavy hair,
And his stick was in my hand, how came it there ?
I looked upon the golden ball and read,
Thro' blood and brains and hair, his name, and said,
"Revenge is sweet!" Ah, God ! I felt it not,
But felt upon my soul a murderous blot.

14.

I fled away, and no one knew nor tho't,
That I, his friend, the awful deed had wro't.

IV. 1.

Oh, words ! Ye are too weak ;
And my tongue is palsied, so I cannot speak ;
Nor can I utter with my lips the dreadful tale.
I would not, yet must, think—she's dead ! And he was
true !

I've murdered him, my friend, for what he did not do,
And I've seen the blood flow from her mouth, and her
red cheeks pale !

2.

Oh, dream ! Why come again ?
Dreams *are* realities—it was too plain.
And will I feel upon my wrists the iron bands ?
I'm doomed ! I'm doomed ! I'm doomed ! To what ?
 Oh, joy, to death !
Again, oh, joy ! For life is but a dream—a path
Thro' dreary wastes of sighing trees and weary lands,
And, as we walk, behind us fall away the sands.

3.

Oh fate ! Thou art too hard—
To give him a name which angels, jealous, guard—
To give her cur of a cousin a name which means so much,
Beauty, friendship, constancy, purity, sacrifice—Rufus !
It meant all this to me, and it means it in heaven above
 us ;
But her cur of a cousin blackens it with his infamous
 touch.

4.

Oh, what a poor excuse for a man !
He accused me of a thing I did not do,
 And for a thing he did not do, my friend I slew,
And thereby slew the coquette, Ann ;

For when she heard that Rufus was no more
 She died, and fell prostrate upon the floor ;
 And her heart's blood bro't these words, as it rose to her
 mouth, with a spurt,
 "I loved you not. I loved him—love him yet ;"
 And I murmured, as her form I raised, "Coquette."
 'Tis thus that her own snares have caught the cruel flirt.

5.

Oh, Vengeance ! Thou has turned
 Thy wrath upon him, and his vengeance spurned.
 He sought to take revenge for my official sentence
 By sland'ring me to his cousin Ann, but now, repentance,
 Not for his sin, but for its awful consequence,
 Moves his tears. I'll on some false, tho' strong pretence
 Make use of my influence as a judge
 To have a sweet revenge—ah ! *This* will be sweet !
 Is Rufus not his name ? The stick ! Oh, fudge !
 What trouble in making the arguments all meet ?

V. 1.

He's standing here before me now
 To receive his sentence of death from me.
 The foreman of the jury has said
 That they have found him plainly to be
 Guilty of murder, but his brow
 Betrays no guilt, but there, instead,
 Is conscious, innocence and dread.

2.

But I will punish him—punish him sore ;
 He laid a dead snake at my door,
 And it shall spring into life and crush
 His lying throat, and his slander hush.

VI. 1.

Ye clanking chains and bare, damp walls of gloom,
 What bro't me here ? Speak out, ye grated bars,
 And tell me—do ye let the light shine in
 Between ye willingly, or do ye begrudge

Me this small boon, and seek to shadow o'er
A part of my lone jail with black marks,
And thereby also cast a gloomy woe
Upon my grieved, lacerated soul ?
Would that I could skip the narrow lines
Of iron shade, and look alone upon
The broad, white light between ! But ah, I can't ;
My soul is cut into strips that ever shift,
With every restless motion, to a plane
Exactly parallel with those black lines—
Would that I could weep ! Why shun me, tears ?
Why not rush forth from sorrow's fount, too full ?
I feel ye come, but terror has so parched
Mine eyelids, that ye hiss and vaporize.
Oh, cruel bars ! Ye tell me I am doomed.
My clanking chains seek not to sooth my heart
With cheerful music, but to rack my brain
With never ceasing rattle, and remind
Me, who would fain forget, of my dark crime.
These mouldy walls are not to shield, but keep.
This untouched food is given, not in sympathy—
A tho't so kind it's coarseness would forbid—
But with a grudging hand, to bolster life,
That it may fly from this poor human house,
Whose rickety frame is shaken, not with age,
But by the heavy bolts of lightening, hurld
Unsparingly from cursed memry's hand,
On pinnons heavier laden, e'en than now,
With cumbrous moisture, dank with bloody shame.

What bro't me here ? What e'er I see replies
That 'twas my crime, and not my sacrifice.
True, this dark cell would ne'er have heard my tread
Had I not entered voluntarily
To let him, innocent of my dark crime,
A little longer breathe free air until
His blackened heart shall bring him to this place ;
But then, if I had never done the deed,
My sacrifice need not have been for him,
Too heavy now with base falsehoods and deeds
Of shame and blood, to 'scape from sinking down
Thro' the thickest filth of hell.
Why did I cheat the De'il ?
What bro't me here ? Not love for him I saved.
What bro't me here ? 'Twas mem'ry's pangs, remorse.

2.

Point not with sympathetic glance to hope—
 It's beams are bright, but never bright for me.
 Say not that love will soothe this aching pain—
 My blackened name denies to me this boom.
 Remind me not of happy days gone by—
 The contrast makes my present pains more keen.
 Hint not to me that I may 'scape my doom—
 I long for death, and yet must try to live
 If life is possible for me to keep ;
 For, much as I loathe this present state of woe,
 I tremble more with terror when I gaze
 Into the dark, uncertain future of that soul,
 Who, impatient, waits not for his summons,
 But breaks his Maker's law in shedding blood,
 And, heedless, risks a leap to worlds unknown
 And thinks to fly against the gate of heaven
 With such great purpose as to crush it in ;
 But his great guilt weighs down his soul so low
 That hell's huge portal feels the welcome shock
 And grants a vict'ry to his mad attempt
 And easy makes the entrance to the flames.
 Seek not to cheer me with the tho't of life—
 Whene'er I dream of possible escape
 I also dream of loaded pistols, knives,
 Poisons, rivers deep and many dark
 And secret ways of ending my own life.
 And when I feel the tempter's nrging prod,
 'Tis then I feel a strong attractive power
 For Hades' gloom ; and all the infernal imps
 Combine their hellish wits and power to win
 My tortured spirit to their fiery realms.
 Then Reason flies before the approach of Death,
 And fierce Despair her customed throne usurps.
 I like not this attraction towards hell ;
 Then speak to me no more of 'scaping death.

VII. 1.

My would-be friends have snatched me from the longed-for death,
 And placed me in a living tomb, where no pure breath
 Can be inhaled ; for 'tis inhabited with knaves
 Just like myself ; and our cells resemble mouldy caves.

2.

Oh, cruel kindness! Life! For life! They call this *life*!
I call it deaths—a hundred deaths each day, and rife
With dread remembrances, and hateful scenes of strife
Between the brutal keepers, and the stubborn slaves—
Yes, slaves in Freedom's land! Far better in their graves.

3.

But hush, complaining spirit; 'tis the hand of God,
The paths of misery must by my feet be trod;
Then let me walk with patience paths I can't avoid—
Perhaps my pangs at last, thro' grace will be alloyed.

C H I L D H O O D ' S D A Y S .

1.

This lovely afternoon I passed the dear old place
Which nothing from my mind, but Death, can e'er efface.

2.

It looked not like the same, the dear old place of youth,
For Negligence was there, and there the hand of sloth.

3.

My heart cried out against the ravages of Age
As back, thro' tears, I looked o'er life's uneven page.

4.

I sought to trace resemblance to the past—in vain!
Fond of Mem'ry, give, oh! Give me youthful eyes again!

5.

Let me descend the rugged back of grizzly Time,
And, Dante-like, ascend unto a happier clime.

6.

Or, rather, let me fly on Mem'ry's easy wings,
And skip the cares which each successive hour brings

7.

Comes now before my eyes, as I with joy revert
To childhood's happy days, a youthful face, and pert.

8.

I see an urchin sit, bare-legged, upon the fence ;
His lazy mien betrays his faults, but not his sense.

9.

Of sunburnt skin, his clothing, full of ugly rents,
An ample view affords, and straight reveals his bents.

10.

I see a likeness, in his saucy face, to me,
For well I mind how good-for-naught I used to be.

11.

How often have I swung upon the cow-pen gate
Until 'twas time to loose the calf, content to wait.

12.

My task of churning was not half complete, as yet,
And want of kitchen wood was making mother fret.

13.

On churning and on chopping wood I looked with scorn,
But chanced, with ear acute, to hear the dinner horn.

14.

And when the men whom pa, to help him work, had hired,
Came from the field, all soiled with labor hard, and tired,

15.

And took their places round the table, spread with care,
Their grimy looks, my appetite, could never mar.

16.

Papa would bring me many gifts, and call me smart,
For dear mama, to tell my faults, had not the heart.

17.

And thus she always shielded me from my deserts,
And doctored patiently my many little hurts.

18.

Each morn, the mischief the day would fill my head ;
Each night, my clamorous bawl was heard, when sent to
bed.

19.

Of mother's very life I was the plague and joy ;
I caused her many cares, but then, she loved her boy.

20.

Would that I now could call her from the silent grave
And tell my penitence, and ask her to forgive !

21.

For when I was yet young, she died, with life a weary,
And left the old farm house all desolate and dreary.

22.

The tho't would oft recur, and cause a bitter tear,
That I had helped to make her life so hard to bear.

23.

The thing we call good-luck, good fortune never is ;
And is prosperity good-luck ? Myself I quiz.

24.

A life that has no cares, refreshing joys ne'er tastes ;
Oases charming seem, because of desert wastes.

25.

Unthankful for the land, till on the ocean vast
By tempests tossed, we shout to see the shore at last.

26.

Life's but a game of hide-and-seek with Fortune played,
And rarely, for our arduous search, we're ever paid.

27.

And if we do successful prove, and Fortune find
Then eager zest for fresh pursuits employs the mind.

28.

Oh, me ! I long for rest from endless longings vain.
I'm tired of being tired of life—this life of pain.

29.

The lilly droops her head, and not again looks up ;
The cowslip folds but once the petals of her cup.

30.

But once remorseless Time from each our youth will sever,
And withering cares supplant its joys, now gone forever.

31.

Unmindful that the wax is spluttering in the sconce,
To Night, I long complain that youth is known but once.

LOVE IS LIFE.

1.

To exist is not to live ;
 The coral and medusae of the ocean exist,
 But no throb can their hearts ever give,
 For they have no hearts. A heavy mist
 Hangs o'er their minds, with nothing rife ;
 They love not, not live ; for love is life.

2.

Let me not, like them, be void of joy—
 Let me live.
 But let me, like them, fill well my place,
 Let me dive
 Into the ocean, and deploy
 Amongst its wonders for a space,
 And learn with patience to run my race,
 And to fight with love in the bitter strife—
 'Twixt right and wrong ; for love is life.

3.

No intellect nor talent is required
 To float upon the silvery wave
 Of simple being,
 In the light of pleasure's golden sun,
 Reclining on cushions of lustful ease,
 With flowers of selfishness around.
 Man's soul with manly purpose should be fired ;
 'Tis seemly that his will should brave,
 By wisely fleeing,
 The Tempter's wiles. A vict'ry won
 O'er carnal desires, will his conscience please,
 And no more will he look upon the ground,
 For, when he conquered in the strife,
 He tasted love, and love is life.

4.

Since man's Creator has endowed
 His creature with so princely gifts

Is it not meet that he be proud ?
 When to the skies
 He turns his eyes,
 And to his God his spirit lifts
 In gratitude, he cries aloud
 "Oh, heaven ! Thy blissful waves I quaff !
 I love ! I live !" Ah ! Love is life.

5.

My soul, can man be satisfied
 With beastly food, and drink the slop
 Of carnal panderings,
 When the food of God is in his hands ?
 Yea, my soul ! I've seen him hide
 His noble gifts, and, groveling, drop
 The attribute of kings
 And take upon himself the bands
 Of death and hate and endless strife,
 And cease to live, for love is life.

6.

Methinks that the heavenly cherubs lean
 Far o'er the bulwarks of the skies
 And look with much astonished gaze
 Upon the wondrous spectacle !
 Their eyes the shape divine have seen,
 Whose glorious symmetry ne'er dies ;
 What wonder that it should amaze
 A saint, to see a human soul
 Maltreat the image of his God,
 And sink, condemned, beneath the sod,
 When up to heaven he could have flown ?
 What wonder that all hope has gone
 From out his breast ? For in the strife
 He had not love, and love is life.

7.

Oh, man ! If yet thou art a man,
 Or, if thou wouldst become a man,
 Pluck thy dowry from the grasp of lust,
 And from thy soul vile longings thrust,
 And love thy better self and God ;

Ascend to where, a babe, thou wert,
To a sinless land, by angel's trod.

Thyself with Truth's bright armor girt,
Be love thy weapon in the strife
And live, a man ; for love is life.

8.

Numbers lie beneath the sod,
Mouldy with decay ;
And yet they're gone to live with God
Forever and for aye ;
But the dead walk side by side each day.
Upon the earth, and claim to live.

The living and the dead unite,
And vows of lasting wedlock plight ;
Their offspring may find life, or stay
In death's cold bonds ; perhaps one may,
Thro' love be quickened ; one be slain
Of hate, and still in death remain ;
Yet they are children of one mother ;
She is sister, he is brother.
And for the dead, there's none to grieve,
For they seem to conquer in the strife,
But they loved not God, and this is life.

9.

Do thou, then, creature of the dust,
Love thy God, for this alone
Can give the eternal flame of trust
Unto thy breast, and from it thrust,
And bid the carnal heart be gone ;
'Tis this, alone, that, in the strife,
Will conquer death ; for love is life.

10.

While around thee hover the shades of grief,
Lift thou thine eyes, and look thro' faith
To the flashing gate of heaven ;
And its glory, borne on a ray of love,
Will fill thy soul, and from above,
As from thy Savior given,
To bless thee in thy valorous strife,
Thy life will come ; for love is life.

To L.....

1.

The dearest idle of my heart,
Sweet girl, oh, lovely maid, thou art.

2.

Ere since that beauteous face of thine
I saw, which, by its power divine,

3.

Did bind the heart of every one
Who looked, to thee, and thee alone.

4.

I've ever dreamed sweet dreams of bliss
And sometimes e'en I've dared to kiss

5.

An angel sweet, who had the face,
The form, the shape, which thee doth grace.

6.

But all those blissful dreams were vain,
For thou wilt not upon me deign

7.

To lavish one sweet smile, not one!
And I am all undone, undone!

LOVE weaves her tendrils round about
And takes possession of the heart;
It struggles in the sweet embrace—
She clings, nor will from it depart.

SUSPENSE.

1.

Slow fly the moments as I wait ;
The draggling hours aweary grow.
I think of what will be my fate
When Clara writes to let me know.

2.

I'm getting gloomy with my fears ;
Oh, this suspense ! Worst form of woe.
A day's a week, and weeks are years,
Till Clara writes to let me know.

3.

Three weeks have drawn their sluggish days
Above my head, so slow, so slow !
I wonder why my love delays—
Dear Clara, write and let me know.

DESPAIR.

1.

Tired ! So tired !
My ideal's heart I've long desired ;
And I would that the restful booths of heaven
Were nearer my soul, with trouble riven.

2.

Come ! Come ! Come !
And take me to my longed-for home ;
Come quick, and relieve my pangs, oh, Death !
Ah, sweet would blow thy chilling breath !

3.

Haste ! Oh, haste !
 The joys of life I ne'er can taste.
 Heart, and oh, heart, so full of woe,
 My ideal's love thou ne'er canst know.

4.

Vain ! In vain
 I seek a respite from this pain !
 And oh, that the one for whom I sigh
 Would love me, ere with grief I die !

A GLANCE.

My love, my life, why tell me nay ?
 Thine eyes, sweet love, thine eyes say yea,
 Whene'er, my heart to bless, by chance
 Thou toward me dost deign to glance.

My love, my life, it thrilled my breast ;
 That look, sweet love, thy heart confessed ;
 I read in it my heaven. How sweet,
 Thine eyes, in raptuous gaze to meet !

My love, my life, I could not brook
 The earnestness of that sweet look ;
 I turned my dazzled eyes away,
 And my face seemed sad, but my heart was gay.

My love, my life, shall I believe
 The words, sweet love, which made me grieve ?
 Or were those words, so cruel, spoken
 That by thy heart they might be broken ?

My love, my life, thine eyes, so true
 Thy words, sweet love, so hard undo ;
 For the secret which thy lips would hide
 Thou dos't with trusting look confide.

My love, my life, say, why, oh ! why
 Wilt thou hide that love for which I sigh,
 And never speak the word so dear,
 Which, sweet, my love, I long to hear ?

THE STORM.

1.

The softly sighing, wooing breeze
Now faintly fans the cheek ;
And, as it rustles 'mongst the trees,
Seems thus to sweetly speak :
“ ‘Tis coming ! ”

2.

The slender, graceful, drooping lilly
And the fragrant rose
Whisper gently, lowly, stilly
As the wind their petals blows,
“ ‘Tis coming ! ”

3.

The lofty peaks that lift their heads
And kiss the azure sky,
Look where the wild goat never treads
And give the warning cry :
“ ‘Tis coming ! ”

4.

The sultry calm—the glaring heat—
The oppressive atmosphere
But make the pulse-strings quicker beat,
For a voice is ever near :
“ ‘Tis coming ! ”

5.

Now, just into the sky their creeps
A curling, smoky cloud ;
And above the blue horizon peeps
A ragged edge of black, that keeps
Ascending, while from its throat there leaps
An exulting cry, and loud :
“ I’m coming ! ”

6.

A sudden puff of cooling air,
A rumbling, grumbling sound ;
A muttering, roaring from afar,
A growling noise, like distant war—
Close the door ! The shutter bar !
Dry leaves are eddying round and round,
And the fierce winds shriek, as they try to tear
The trees from their grasp in the ground,
“ I’m coming ! ”

7.

A sudden pause. No sound is heard
Save the whirr of the wing of a frightened bird,
Seeking for a shelter.
The gloom is lit by a blinding flash,
The silence broken by a crash ;
And then comes, helter-skelter,
Rain-drops, hail stones, pouring, pelting,
Beating, sleetting, rattling, melting ;
And the blazing lightenings never die,
And the belching thunders in the sky
Are booming !

8.

“ How mighty Nature’s arm ! ”—
Rattle-te-bang !
The elements clang,
And the lightening thrusts its gleaming fang
Into the heart of the storm,
Whose terrible groan of rage and pain
Reverberates loud again and again
While down rush tears of sleet and rain ;
And whose concussion shakes, to their roots,
The ancient oaks, and with them disputes
The little land
On which they stand ;
And whose mad bolts are split on the spire
Which up to the region of blackness and fire
Is looming !

9.

The storm-king's rage has all been spent,
And now, the yellow rays
Of the setting sun on the clouds imprint
A gilded kiss of praise,
Over the East a bow is bent,
And I gaze, enraptured and intent,
In the gloaming.

To, Widow of a Minister.

1.

Thou art gone to the land of sweet repose,
And thy suff'ring soul no longer knows
The deep pangs of bereavement and sorrow for one
Who before thee has fled from this earth where he shone,
And, a pure gem in memory, glows.

2.

Thou has entered the gate to lasting joy
And no more will the cares of earth annoy
Thy poor, languishing spirit, forever now flown
To the realms of sweet rest, where no sorrow is known.
Thou has found, for thy grief, an alloy.

3.

Thou art gone to the land of calm delights
And thy spirit ascends the blissful heights
To again meet thy love, who before thee has gone,
To that beautiful home being called to atone
For a life full of withering blights.

4.

Thou art gone to abide with saints of light
In the city whose streets of gold, so bright,
Oft resounds to the tread of thy spouse, who his crown
At the feet of the Lord has gladly cut down—
Ah ! Sweet tho't, heaven's gift can requite !

MEMORIALS—A FRAGMENT.

We may forget a monument of art ;
Let dear remembrance sanctify a shrine
Within our hearts, and let it be revered
With sacred reverence for the honored name,
Carve a statue to that name, of Love,
With hands that hang not cold and stiff in stone
Nor sightless orbs, nor heart encased in marble,
Nor feet that cling to one hard block of art ;
But with free hands that freely give to want,
And eyes that beam with kindly sympathy,
And with a heart that throbs with charity,
And with swift feet to seek out want or woe ;
Perpetuate his words and deeds of love ;
For he, tho' gone forever from our midst,
Is well deserving tears should wet his grave—
A tribute nobler far than polished stone,
For monuments which pierce the air, and break
The force of storms ; on whose smooth face the feet
Of lightening slip, or, squarely striking it,
Rebound from its cold surface with a shudder,
Are not as meet to bear a good man's name
As one which pierces darkened clouds of woe
And lets the light of joy in on the soul,
Or one which breaks from off a helpless head
The storms of anguish, with which life is full,
And shields the unprotected from the darts
Of diabolic men, or hurls them back,
With increased fire, at their own black hearts.

No SLEEP IN HEAVEN.

1.

Do angels sleep?
When o'er our sins and cares they weep,
And round our beds their vigils keep,
And sorrow, do they ever steep
Their souls in languor deep?
Do they not sometime peep
Thro' half-closed eyes, and sleep?
No. Angels do not sleep.

2.

Does Jesus sleep,
Who o'er our sins and cares did weep
And on His heart our guilt did heap?
Does He a faithless vigil keep,
Who sowed, that we might reap?
No, Jesus does not sleep.

3.

Will Christians sleep,
When from the chrysalis they creep
And on bright wings of glory leap—
When o'er the pillowy clouds they peep
And watch the twilight shadows creep,
While they the love-light reap?
No, Christians will not sleep.

4.

No sleep in heaven!
Will not this boon to us be given—
This precious boon for which we've striven,
Our hearts with trouble being driven
To hope for rest in heaven?

5.

Will Sorrow kiss
 The blooming cheeks of rapturous Bliss
 And rapturous Bliss return the kiss ?
 Or will the arrows from the deep abyss
 Of grief, our spirits miss,
 And, harmless, by us hiss ?

6.

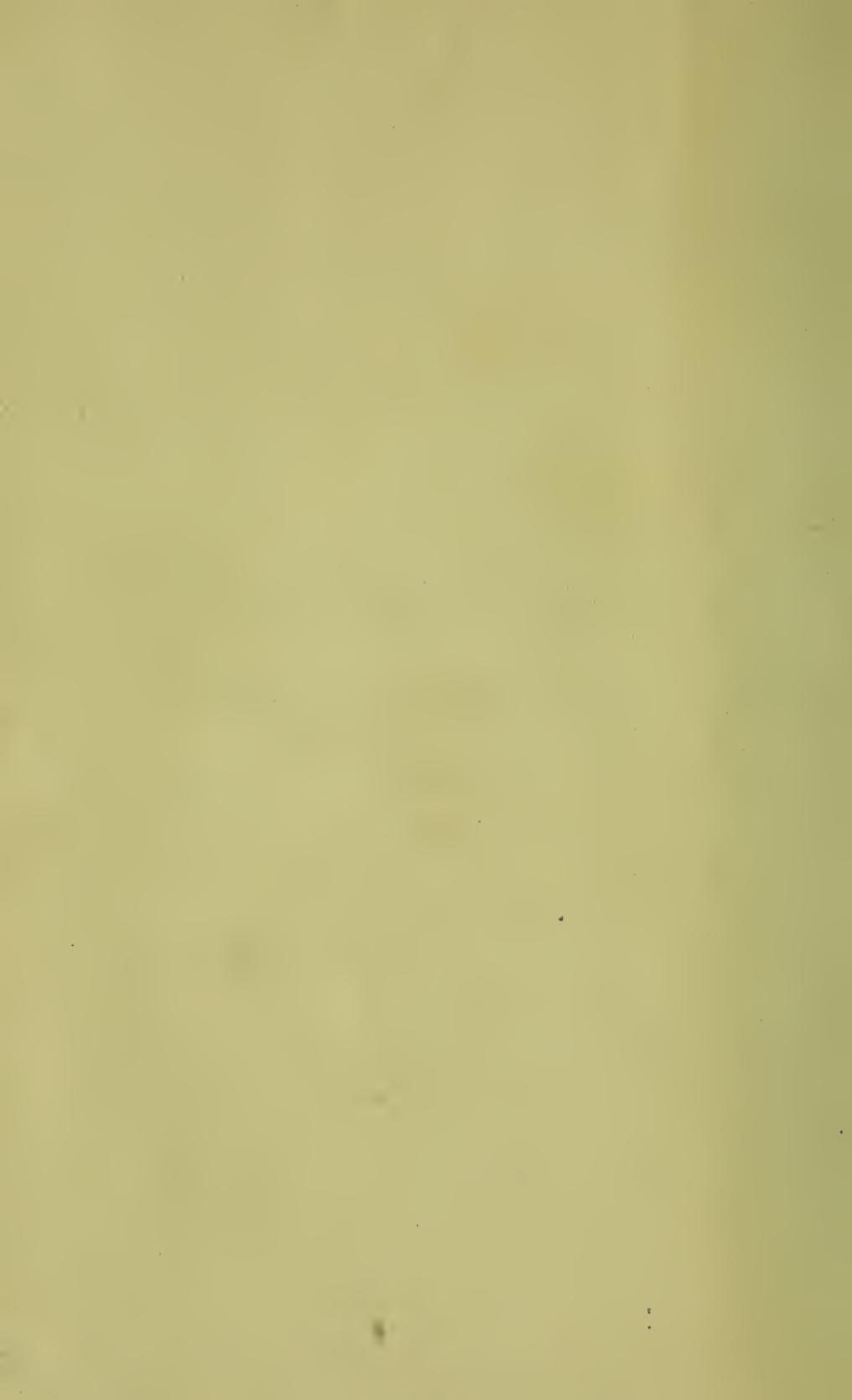
Will mem'ry's darts
 With tho'ts of sorrow pierce our hearts ?
 Can we recall the woeful parts
 Of life, and feel the painful smarts
 Of cruel mem'ry's darts ?

7.

We'll wakeful be ;
 No cause we'll have to sleep, that we
 May thus forget our misery ;
 For Sorrow from our hearts will flee,
 And disappointments find in thee,
 Oh, place of rest, a tree
 Whose healing leaves are free.

8.

In sweet repose
 We will recall our many woes,
 But never more can feel their throes.
 The River of Life forever flows
 Up there, and the love-light ever glows.
 No saint nor angel pain e'er knows,
 For there, oh, there, the rose
 In thornless beauty blows.



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